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INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

FIDEL CASTRO SPEECH OF 13 MARCH

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

Office of Current Intelligence

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Current Intelligence
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INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Fidel Castro Speech of 13 March

Summary

Fidel Castro's speech of 13 March at Havana University reflected deep concern over domestic and foreign problems. The Cuban leader castigated the Chinese for their cavalier disregard of trade commitments with Havana and implicitly accused the quarreling Russians and Chinese of exposing lesser Communist regimes to "imperialist" threats. Apparently less disposed than before to follow a policy of moderation and coexistence in the hemisphere, Castro attacked Chilean President Frei for the first time. Finally, in what appears to be fresh evidence of his regime's need for scapegoats for its economic shortcomings, Castro vowed a purge of "dilettantes and playboys."

1. In his speech of 13 March at Havana University, Fidel Castro hurled new insults at Peking and charged that the Chinese leaders, in their old age, have confused Marxism-Leninism with fascism. The attack was essentially a reiteration of Castro's earlier statements, and came exactly one year after his first criticism of China. He repeated most of his charges of 2 January against the Chinese for reducing rice shipments to Cuba, as well as his complaint of 6 February that Chinese representatives had distributed propaganda materials among high Cuban officials and had attempted to subvert Cuban officers. In directly criticizing the Chinese leadership, Castro was more contemptuous than heretofore, but it is not likely that he will sever relations with Peking at this time, or that the Chinese will be provoked into a complete break. Castro probably will confine himself to baiting the Chinese, perhaps by demanding a reduction in the 50-man embassy staff in Havana and by harassing other Chinese representatives in Cuba.

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2. In calling for greater military aid to Vietnam, Castro was less impassioned and more explicit than he has been in the past. He appeared to outline the extent of Cuba's willingness to help and may have intended to set the stage for delivery of token anti-aircraft or other defensive equipment to North Vietnam. He said: "It is not necessary to perform an offensive act. It is enough to give Vietnam all the conventional armament necessary for the anti-aircraft struggle." Castro again implicitly criticized the Sino-Soviet rift for exposing "small and weak" countries, such as Cuba and Vietnam, to the threat of "imperialism."

3. For the first time, Castro denounced President Eduardo Frei of Chile and his Christian Democratic Party, and said that in Chile "the only way to win the revolutionary struggle will be by the armed struggle." He denounced Frei as a coward, a liar, and a reactionary. In the past, Castro had hoped to break out of his diplomatic isolation in the hemisphere by encouraging better relations with Chile and hence excluded Chile from his diatribes against the "reactionaries and puppets" of Latin America. His belligerent criticism of Frei on 13 March, however, suggests that Castro is losing interest in coexistence and compromise in the hemisphere. The attack reflects the same militancy he displayed at the recent Tri-Continent Conference in Havana.

4. Castro's concern with Cuba's various internal problems was also a recurring theme. He discussed the economic hardships which "Chinese treachery" had brought upon Cuba's consumers and indicated that 1966 sugar production at best will barely exceed 5 million tons--1.5 million tons short of the objective. But Castro was most agitated and defensive about widespread rumors of increased opposition within his regime. He denied press reports that there had been student demonstrations at Havana University two weeks ago in connection with the trial of Major Rolando Cubela. Castro appeared confident of his grip on power and said that Cubela would not be executed because of the benevolence and confidence of the revolution.

5. Castro announced that there will be a purge of "not more than fifty" dilettantes and playboys in the Foreign and Foreign Trade ministries for their

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excesses and pursuit of what he described as the "dolce vita." Since coming to power in 1959, Castro has persistently and puritanically endeavored to end the vice and corruption which were typical of some segments of Cuban society. In addition, for at least a year, Castro has sponsored young and presumably more efficient technicians in high government posts and has removed many of his veteran colleagues of the revolution. His purge of dilettantes appears to be an intensification of these policies and a result of his continuing need to find scapegoats for the regime's failures.

6. On 17 March, the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party announced that Major Efigenio Ameijeiras was the first to lose his party and military posts. Although Ameijeiras was a friend of Cubela, he did not figure in the trial proceedings, and his complete loyalty to Castro has never been questioned. He was one of the twelve who survived Castro's invasion of Cuba in 1956 and fought alongside him through the entire Sierra Maestra campaign. Ameijeiras frequently has been described as a drunkard, a marijuana user, and a reprobate. His dismissal, therefore, is not related to larger political issues and is an outgrowth of Castro's clean-up campaign.

7. It is likely that only a few important figures will be included in the purge. [redacted] [redacted] certain labor and military leaders will be ousted, but there are no indications that the regime will move concertedly against any one group.

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